

# Hiram Herald

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## State Transportation Tax Would Hurt Hiram

Citizens of Hiram:

For those who have been following what is going on under the Gold Dome this legislative session or have tuned into radio or televised news programs, you have likely heard of House Bill 170 (HB 170), the Transportation Funding Act of 2015. HB 170 is aimed at helping the State of Georgia raise additional revenue to address transportation needs at the cost of local taxpayers. Your City Council passed a Resolution presented by our City Manager at a special called meeting February 10 to officially and with 100% consensus oppose this reckless and one-sided legislation.

Essentially, this legislation will reduce sales tax collected by local governments on motor fuel taxes for non-transportation purposes. These are the dollars that you and I spend right here in our backyard. If motor fuel is removed or exempted from local sales taxes, the City of Hiram will



lose a significant source of revenue to serve our City.

Hiram has already spent \$1,474,692 from SPLOST on capital improvements in the area of streets, roads and bridges over the last three years and is expected to spend another \$1,739,838 over the next three years. If HB 170 passes and is signed by the Governor, our City would lose approximately \$165,741 per year in SPLOST to dedicate to transportation improvements.

Furthermore, the City of Hiram spends

over \$100,000 every year from its General Fund for maintenance and operations of municipal roads, streets and bridges. The mere suggestion that Georgia's local governments are not making substantial investments toward transportation projects is inaccurate.

On your behalf, your governing body strongly opposes any recommendation or measure to reduce the allocation of sales tax funding to local governments. A signed copy of this Resolution has been forwarded to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly. Please join us in opposing HB 170 by contacting our local delegation that includes Senator Bill Heath, Senator Mike Dugan, Representative Paulette Braddock, Representative Micah Gravley, Representative Kimberly Alexander and Representative Howard Maxwell.

—Mayor Doris Ann Devey

## ‘Hiram Hounds’ Dog Park Opening this Spring

### Homer Leggett Park Site to Have 3 Fenced Areas

Hiram residents and visitors will have a dog park to exercise their canines this spring.

One of the reasons the City of Hiram acquired Homer Leggett Park next to the Silver Comet Trail on Seaboard Avenue last year was to build a dog park. The city considered other locations but chose Homer Leggett Park because it is close to a parking area and the Silver Comet trailhead where many people go for recreation.

The dog park will be at the rear of Homer Leggett Park behind the existing concession and restroom facilities and adjacent to the train facsimile playground. The plan is to provide three separate fenced areas for dogs with three categories of activities.

The smallest will be 3,813 square feet in a fenced area for

dogs less than 35 pounds to play openly. An open play area for dogs weighing more than 35 pounds will be 6,400 square feet fenced, and the largest area for open play for dogs of all sizes will be about 16,577 square feet fenced.

All areas can be used at owners' risk. Each fenced area will have a secured entrance with two separate gates, the first allowing entry into the area with access to the second gate to reduce the opportunity for animals to escape.

Staff is getting pricing quotes for the three fenced areas and will assist with site preparation to reduce costs.

The long-term goal is to work with community partners and volunteers to acquire or build agility equipment for the dogs and provide water stations, benches and other amenities for pets and their owners.

Anyone wishing to provide financial or labor support for the project can call 770-943-3726; the phone number will also be posted on site with the “Future Home of City of Hiram ‘Hiram Hounds’ Dog Park” sign.



# Hiram's FY2014 Budget Receives Glowing Audit Report

By City Manager Robbie Rokovitz

As a qualified local government, one of our mandatory requirements is reporting on our financial position. This is done annually using a professional CPA who conducts an audit on all our funds including every source of revenue, all expenditures and assets and liabilities.



The most recent audit conducted by James Whitaker and his team covered the 2014 fiscal year which began July 1, 2013, and ended June 30, 2014. We are proud to announce that the City received a great report on its finances and our fiscal health is strong.

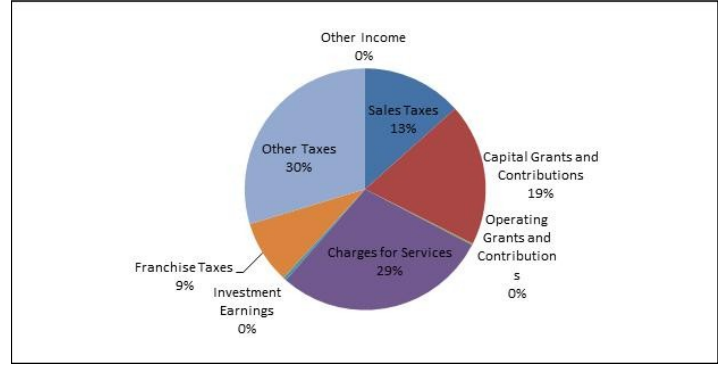
The assets of the City of Hiram exceeded its liabilities by \$15,267,037. Of this amount, unrestricted net position of \$7,572,355 may be used to meet the government's ongoing obligations to citizens. Of that amount, \$1,288,092 has been set aside to help fund the downtown sewer project.

The total net position increased by \$214,524. Of this amount, an increase of \$219,126 was associated with governmental and a decrease of \$4,602 was from business-type activities.

As of the close of the fiscal year, the City of Hiram's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$8,223,288, a decrease of \$829,972 in comparison with the prior year. At the end of the year, unassigned fund balance for the General Fund was \$7,028,364 or 212.6% of total General Fund expenditures.

Governmental activities increased the City's net position \$219,126, accounting for all of the increase in net position for the year. Key elements of this increase are as follows: The City's share of Local Option Sales Tax increased from 3.3% to 4.00% (an increase of .07%) beginning at mid-fiscal year, which provided an estimated annualized increase of \$119,000.

A portion of this increase was recognized as additional revenue beginning in January 2014. The amended budget projected this



source of revenue to be \$593,750, which resulted in a 13% increase over FY2013.

In FY2013, probation services payments were separated out, leaving court fines collected at \$506,330. After reviewing previous fiscal years' revenues minus probation service payments, the City projected collections for FY2014 to be \$600,000.

SPLOST revenues had a slight decrease over 2013 of \$10,870 or 1.3%. New State legislation which modified the collection of the Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) that went into effect in FY2013 resulted in a net increase of revenue to the City. This additional source of revenue resulted in \$126,619 in additional revenues.

Expenditures related to salaries and benefits decreased over 3% from \$2,092,706 to \$2,028,846. This was a result of reducing overtime expenditures, postponing the funding of two frozen police officer positions and addressing vacant positions with part-time staff as opposed to full-time employees.

One of the most powerful statements that can be used to describe our fiscal year audit is the following quote from the Director of the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, Doug Pirkle, CPA: "No items were identified for correction during our review."

This audit is available for viewing, or you can contact me at any time for questions and concerns.

## Hiram Helps Provide IV Wagons for Paulding Hospital

Hospitalized children can now be ambulatory more easily and safely with a child's wagon developed by Roger Leggett and his son, the late Chad Leggett.

Waiting at the hospital in 2011 while Chad's young daughter had surgery for a brain tumor, the men noticed a mother trying to get her child, who was seated in a wagon, and the child's IV pole into an elevator. She almost fell on her child trying to stop the falling IV pole from crashing to the ground, and the Leggetts saw a need they could fill.

Following Chad's unexpected death three weeks after his daughter's successful surgery, Roger continued to pursue their idea with help from co-workers at Lockheed Martin and welding students from Chattahoochee Technical College. They outfitted a red wagon with an IV pole attached



**From left are Councilman Pep Rollins, Mayor Doris Devey, Mayor Pro Tem Kathy Bookout, Roger Leggett, Councilwoman Teresa Philyaw, Councilwoman Kathy Carter and Councilman Derrick Battle.**

equipment and named the new product

Chad's Brackets.

Leggett, who has served on the Paulding County Board of Commissioners, sought donations to provide hospitals with Chad's Brackets, and Hiram Councilwoman Teresa Philyaw heard about the project and successfully elicited support from the rest of the City Council.

Chad's Brackets provided by the City of Hiram, Grand's Convenience Store and Georgia Heritage Bank now provide children and their families safe transportation around WellStar Paulding Hospital's Pediatric Emergency Department.

"There is nothing more precious than our children who we strive to protect and create an environment that is safe for them," said Councilwoman Philyaw. "The City Council and I are blessed to have a hometown leader and innovator like Roger who saw a need and poured his heart and soul into addressing that need."



## Hiram Calendar

**March 28** - Olde Town Hiram Business Association's Pancake Breakfast and photos with Easter Bunny, 8:30-11 a.m., Olive tree

**March 24** - Livable Centers Initiative public meeting, 6-8 p.m., The Events Place

**March 31** - City Council work session

**April 3** - Good Friday; City Hall closed

**April 5** - Easter Sunday

**April 7** - City Council regular session

**April 18** - Contagious concert in Olde Town Hiram

**April 28** - City Council work session

**April 29** - Paulding County Civic Youth Day

**May 5** - City Council regular session

**May 10** - Mothers Day

**May 16** - Hiram Community Yard Sale

**May 25** - Memorial Day; City Hall closed

**May 26** - City Council work session

### Municipal Court arraignments

March 5, April 2, May 7.

### Municipal Court trials

March 23, April 27, May 18.

# Downtown Public Parking Expanding

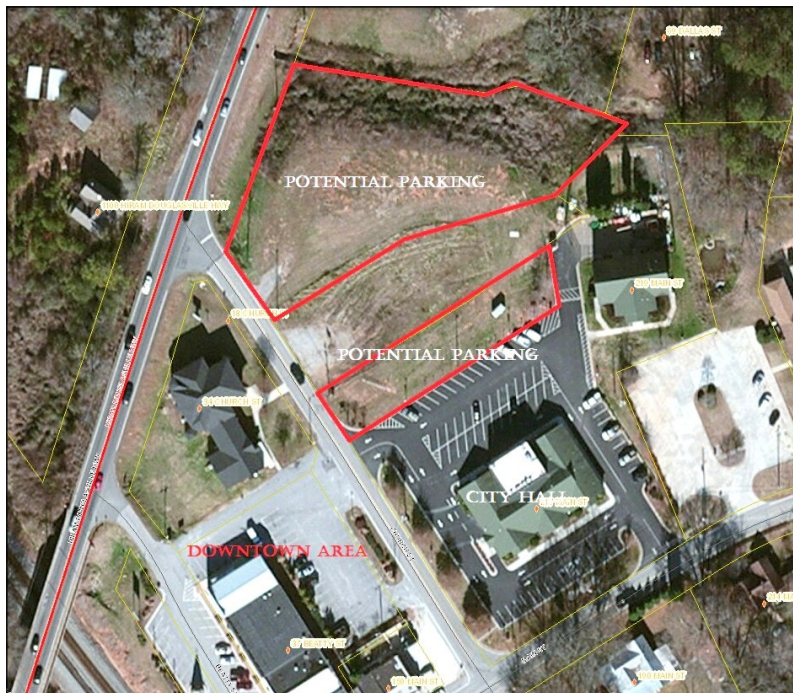
Hiram's City Council is taking steps to prepare for the additional development activity that will result from the imminent extension of sewer lines to the historic downtown area.

"One of these needs, which always seem to plague a downtown if not done well, is the availability of ample parking," says City Manager Robbie Rokovitz. "Parking, or the lack thereof, can make or break the revitalization of a downtown and suppress the retention of current merchants and deter the recruitment of new merchants."

Good fortune and proper planning provide the potential for additional public parking that will serve downtown businesses, as well as residents parking for Municipal Court and other City services. The City owns property contiguous to Ga. 92 and Church Street. One parcel separates the property from City Hall, but that parcel later may become available with the expansion of the sanitary sewer line into downtown.

In the meantime, Hiram has been working with engineers from Stevenson and Palmer to design a parking lot on the City-owned property with the potential of expanding the lot later.

The City is seeking somewhere between 38 and 95 spaces depending on the Council-approved design from the engineers. The City



could create 38 spaces now and add an additional 57 spaces if the septic field lines are removed.

This parking lot is also being planned with consideration of the State Route 92 widening project taking place in Douglasville and coming toward Hiram.

The rough estimate for the construction of a parking lot, the design engineering and construction management fees is forthcoming. The funding for this project has not been identified, but it is a capital project, meaning it would be eligible for Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds and/or the City's capital reserves.

## Historic Hiram Photos Sought

The Olde Town Hiram Business Association wants to borrow photos of historic Hiram.

Residents can mail original photos or copies to: Olde Town Hiram Business Association, c/o Carmen Rollins, P.O. Box 160, Hiram, GA 30141.



## City Clerk Earns Certification

Hiram City Clerk Cynthia Geyer-Tressel is now a Certified Municipal Clerk after completing the Georgia Certificate Program for City Clerks.

The program consists of 101 hours of instruction in general management, with candidates applying knowledge learned to practical local government situations after each course. They must serve two years in a local government

administrative position and be a member of the Georgia Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association.

Geyer-Tressel started her municipal career with the City of Hiram in 2009 and was appointed City Clerk in 2012. "The citizens of Hiram are fortunate to have the level of professionalism and credentials Cynthia brings," says City Manager Robbie Rokovitz.

This is an official publication of the City of Hiram, funded by the City's Hotel/Motel Tax



Doris Devey, Mayor  
Kathy Bookout, Post 2, Mayor Pro Tem  
Prather "Pep" Rollins, Post 1  
Teresa Philyaw, Post 3  
Derrick Battle, Post 4  
Kathy Carter, Post 5  
Robbie Rokovitz, City Manager

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# Strickland Park Getting New Playground Equipment

The City Council hopes to have new playground equipment installed next to the tennis courts at Ben Hill Strickland Sr. Park by the time weather improves.

Early this year the Council received proposals for new playground equipment that will be placed at three areas in the park using the City's share of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).

The largest area next to the tennis courts will be improved first. As SPLOST revenues come in, the playground areas fronting Oak Street behind the amphitheater



**The Hiram City Council will soon consider options for playground equipment to be installed at three places in Ben Hill Strickland Sr. Park this year. Several Paulding County parks have playgrounds with equipment manufactured by GameTime (above).**

and fronting Ragsdale Street near the popular basketball court will have new equipment as well.

The Council has directed staff to further research the size and scope of each area and how to best use each

and holistic playground equipment. The Council will also consider playground surface options to ensure safety.

space while ensuring SPLOST is used effectively. Staff will solicit bids for equipment and installation to present to the Council for its contract decision. Cost will be determined by the equipment needed for each play configuration.

Samples provided to the Council thus far are manufactured by GameTime, A Playcore Company.

Paulding County parks at Burnt Hickory and White Oak feature this type of interactive

## Third Annual Citizens Police Academy Here April through June

The Hiram Police Department will strengthen bonds with the community this spring as it hosts its third annual Citizens Police Academy April through June.

Up to 20 Academy participants will study topics that include ethics, use of force, criminal investigations, firearms and criminal procedure. The group will visit the 911 Center and Paulding County Detention Center and learn how law enforcement works in tandem with corrections, probation and the courts to create today's criminal justice system.

Applications are available on Hiram's website, [www.cityofhiramga.gov](http://www.cityofhiramga.gov), and should be returned to City Hall by March 27.

Target stores provided Academy funding, and "with Target's support and assistance, we are able to once again provide an excellent educational opportunity that offers participants the chance to learn and experience policing 'from behind the badge,'" said Police Chief Todd Vande Zande. "We are very excited to once again be hosting this challenging and edu-

cational program, and we look forward to using this opportunity as a way to bring our police officers to our community and our community to our police officers."

Citizens Academy sessions are April 16, 23 and 30; May 7, 14, 21, 23 and 28; June 4, 11 and 18.



### *Contagious in Concert April 18 in Olde Town*

Olde Town Hiram Business Association plans three events this spring: Pancake Breakfast and photos with the Easter Bunny, 8:30-11 a.m. March 28 at Olive Tree; Contagious (left) in concert in Olde Town Hiram April 18; and the Hiram Community Yard Sale May 16.

**This publication made possible through tourism and trade dollars generated by our local hotels and motels**